Sealift

MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND
December 1978

To each member
Of the Military Sealift Command family
Whether on land or at sea
May your holidays be bountiful,
And your New Year be filled
With peace, love and happiness

Commander, Military Sealift Command

COVER: Art Mullins designed this seasonal cover with a nautical touch.

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Seamanship Thrives Aboard USNS Hudson

By Adrian Spidle
Master, USNS Hudson

Editors Note: Collisions and other sea disasters generally receive worldwide attention. The following story did not. Written by the master of the MSC controlled tanker USNS Hudson, it is about a potential tragedy that did not happen, a disaster prevented by an alert and professional ship's crew.

USNS Hudson had arrived about 2 a.m. at Donges, France off the mouth of the Loire. It was December 22.

We were waiting to go up river for a berth at the pipeline Feu de L'Arceau to discharge 301,000 barrels of jet fuel for U.S. armed forces in West Germany.

The pipeline finally became available early in the morning of December 24 and we got under way with a French pilot, Yves Savary, guiding the vessel up-river.

Savary has many years of service on the Loire, having piloted vessels of all sizes to ports from St. Nazaire to Nantes. He was concerned that day about the Hudson's deep draft and the strong river currents. There was also a full moon activating the tides.

We needed three powerful tugs to assist us since our plan was to dock the Hudson at the high water slack period which would last only a few minutes.

We had no problem in docking the Hudson. But, we were still aware that in recent months several large vessels had broken their moorings at Feu de L'Arceau. Savary suggested we take extra precautions, that we use all lines and wires available on the Hudson, and order more from ashore.

In addition to using our eight-inch polypropylene lines and one-inch steel wires, we brought aboard three 3-inch steel cables.

With all the lines in place, Savary felt that Hudson was secure. But he

The Hudson crew has built a reputation delivering military fuel on time.

advised that we stay alert, particularly at low water when the vessel's keel would be closest to the river bottom.

Savary also recommended that we discharge our jet fuel cargo rapidly to lighten the vessel as soon as possible. We began discharging at 7:40 a.m., using two pumps from the aftermost tanks to reduce the 38-foot draft quickly.

Everything went well for the next two hours. Then we noticed that the ebb tide was adding force to an already strong river current, causing a great strain on all mooring lines, especially those at the ship's bow.

At the same time, the cargo vessel High Point came down river from Nantes creating her bow waves of more than moderate height. It might have been additional pressure from a bow wave that caused the forward lines to break.

Forward moorings became very taut and the steel cables began throwing off sparks like Fourth of July sparklers. Huge wires started snapping, one after another, making sounds like the sharp crack of a high powered rifle.

After the last bow wire had snapped, the eight-inch lines began stretching, then all seemed to break at the same time. The ship's bow made a 45 degree right angle turn from the dock.

Capt. Adrian Spidle, master of the USNS Hudson.

To hold the Hudson at 45 degrees, First Officer Arthur Boudreau, Third Officer David Pray and Boatswain Bertail Hager dropped both ship anchors.

The stern lines were still holding when I made my way to the bridge. Down in the engine room Chief Engineer James Terry and Second Assistant Engineer Robert Dow were getting the engines ready. First Assistant Engineer Steve West and Quartermaster Thomas Curtis were repairing a broken lube oil line.

I realized that the stern lines would soon fail and the Hudson could be swept by the current into the giant tanker World Horizon moored nearby down river.

I blew the danger signal on the ship's whistle and rang the general alarm to warn the crew of danger and call them to their stations. Standby engines were ordered and we got an immediate response.

All action to this point—dropping anchors, activity in the engine room, the crew running to their stations—had taken place within three minutes after the bow lines began breaking.

When Able Seaman Enrique Gil reported to the bridge, he was assigned the wheel. The radio officer arrived and was told to call tugs and pilot by radio. He also tried to reach port authorities and ships agents to inform them of the situation.

We knew we could do nothing to prevent the overwhelming force of the river from also breaking the after steel cables, mooring wires and polypropylene lines.

The lines stretched to the breaking point, then snapped, putting the Hudson on a 60 degree angle to the terminal. Everything depended on our ability to maneuver the ship to prevent it from being swept into a collision with the gas-filled World Horizon.

There was no time to reflect on the disaster that could result from such a collision or damage to the Hudson propeller that could come from the heavy wires dangling from the Hudson's stern.

I was beleaguered. I ordered a hard left on the rudder and half speed ahead to move the stern to the right and away from the danger of a collision with the World Horizon.

I was relieved when I saw the RPM indicator move from zero to sixty and the stern move ever so slowly against the force of the current.

We missed the tanker by 10 feet.

But that was only one victory. Hudson was still in danger of being turned broadside by the violent river current, or pushed helplessly downstream into another vessel. There were also the huge abutments of the St. Nazaire-Nantes bridge looming menacingly two miles down river.

Another danger was going aground on the river shoals or mud banks and seriously damaging the ship.

We continued to drag both anchors through the river mud to keep the bow under control. Using the engine carefully, we maneuvered the ship across the swift water of the channel to the less forceful water on the left bank.

At 10:30 a.m. the vessel was in a relatively stationary position, about three quarters of a mile from its original berth.

With both anchor chains forward, using rudder and propeller, we were able to keep the bow into the current and keep from going aground in the shallows to the right or moving further downstream into danger.

By 11:15 a.m. the worst was over. The powerful French tug Brehat arrived and made fast to our port bow. We were no longer alone in our fight against disaster.

However, the arrival of the tug nearly two hours after the Hudson broke away from the dock was not enough to enable the vessel to turn around in the narrow river channel and move to safe anchorage. We waited.

An hour later two more tugs came alongside. Only then did we feel the crisis was over. The Hudson was turned and proceeded down the river 18 miles from the Feu de L'Arneau terminal.

Courageous and skilled actions by

These Vietnamese refugees offer living testimony to the skills of the Hudson crew.

the crew of USNS Hudson saved their vessel, a U.S.-built oil terminal and possibly their own lives and those of others.

The property loss could have been enormous and French-American relations would have been strained if a fire or explosion had resulted from our collision with another tanker.

The action of Hudson officers and unlicensed seamen on board at the time of the breakaway were worthy of the highest praise and any commendation I can recommend.

Also a key figure in helping avert a disaster at the terminal was Joseph E. Long, the MSC fuel quality assurance representative at Donges.

Long headed to his office immediately after learning of the incident and maintained contact with MSC authorities and other agencies through the Christmas holiday, until the emergency ended.

Long and the officers and crew of the Hudson subsequently were commended by MSC Commander Rear Adm. John D. Johnson for their sterling performances in an emergency situation.

All also can be proud of the Hudson which performed extremely well under great stress. Unlike steam engines, diesels can be started in a very short time, as we proved in this incident.

The steering gear, ground tackle and all other components functioned well under pressure and the bulbous bow served a good purpose. An inspection showed no damage to the Hudson. The only losses were the lines which later were recovered and spliced.

Fortunately, the terminal was equipped with a Chicksan loading arm for instant disengagement. As a result, there was no cargo spill.

The loading berth is situated on an outer bend of the river. Silt carried by currents collects at the bend and in time makes the river bottom at the berth shallower.

The accumulated silt is a problem for vessels with large drafts. In August, the port authorities began the first of several dredging operations this year to remove the silt.

Until the operations are completed, vessels at the berth will have to restrict their drafts from the usual 38 feet to 34 feet.

The berth was to be closed again in October for additional dredging operations, and in early November for improvements to its mooring system. That will take about three weeks.

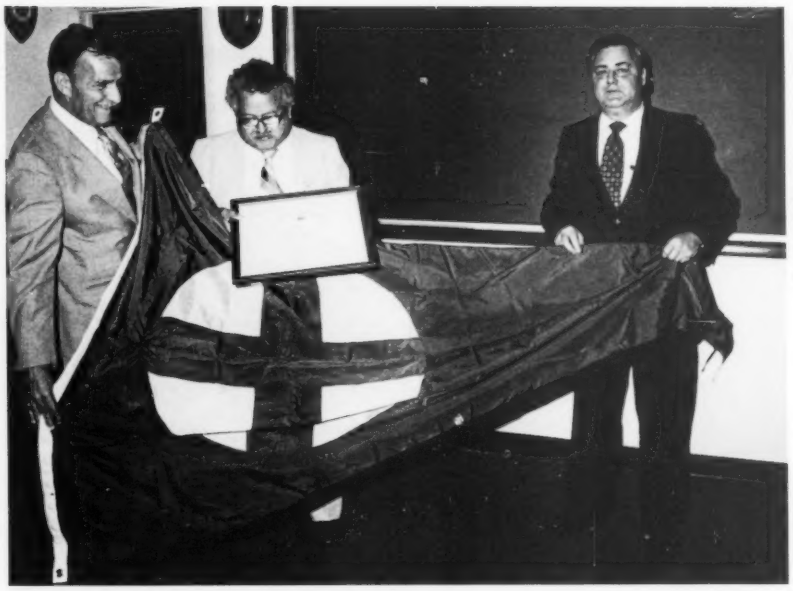
Certainly MSC and Cove Shipping Inc. prefer to have vessels under their control make smooth uneventful voyages. But if the unexpected happens, as it did in this case, they should be pleased to know they have men who can handle a challenge—and ships equal to the task.

After two years of service with Falcon Tankers and two years of Civil Service operation by MSC, Hudson was delivered to Mount Shipping (Now Cove Tankers, Inc.) at Yokohama on May 8, 1976.

Two years later, Hudson had called at 81 ports, sailed 144,566 nautical miles, and delivered 750,000 tons of petroleum products needed for U.S. defense bases around the world.

There are 47 South Vietnamese refugees now living in the United States who have fond memories of the Hudson.

On Aug. 22, 1976 they were rescued from their 50-foot boat by the men of the Hudson. Hudson was in the South China Sea when it came upon the refugees who had fled Vietnam. ⚓



Participating in the presentation were Admiral Benkert (left), Captain Delgado and Captain Sammis.

Sealift Mediterranean Crew Upholds Seafaring Tradition

By Larry C. Manning

It took place October 10, in Room 302 of the Tamol Building, 4228 Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, D.C.

In a city where ceremonies are as numerous as waves on the ocean, it was routine. No television cameras, no press photographers, no note-taking writers, just a room full of spectators drawn from the Military Sealift Command headquarters staff. Command headquarters are in the Tamol Building.

Principals in the ceremony included three admirals, one Navy and two Coast Guard, plus a group of officials from a U. S. ship operating company, representatives of the National Safety Council and a maritime trade association, and Capt. Antonio Delgado.

He represented the skilled and heroic men who were being honored—men who were not there because the ship they sailed, USNS Sealift Mediterranean, even then was slicing its way through the waters of the Atlantic with another load of fuel for U.S. Armed Forces.

They were delivering the same type of load in June 1977—headed for Cristobal in the Canal Zone, having departed from Baton Rouge, La. on what is normally a four day voyage. But, between June 8 and June 12 the crew of Sealift Mediterranean added a few experiences to their individual logs of sea stories and helped write new and bright entries in that chapter of maritime history headed: In The Tradition of The Sea.

Captain Delgado was in Washington October 10 to receive the coveted Ship Safety Achievement Award presented annually by the American Institute of Merchant Shipping, AIMS for those not familiar with the Washington world of acronyms, and by the Marine Section of the National Safety Council.

The earning of the award—symbolized by a plaque, a large blue, green, and white safety pennant to be flown above the ship, and individual citations for every crew member—began June 8 in late afternoon. Intercepting a distress message from a burning Liberian freighter, Captain Delgado diverted his ship to aid fellow mariners in distress.

On the scene about three hours later, but unable to get close to SS Joy because of the highly explosive load of fuel his ship carried, Captain Delgado asked for volunteers. As usual, more men volunteered than were needed.

Manning a lifeboat, 10 members of the Sealift Mediterranean crew sped to the side of the Joy to provide the crew with portable fire extinguishers, and to help fight the fire.

The crew of SS Joy lost their fight against the fire, one of the most dreaded of terrors at sea. Their ship

slid beneath the waves. However, not one crewman went with it.

All were saved by members of the Sealift Mediterranean crew and crews of other ships that arrived on scene. Captain Delgado had been appointed on-scene commander by the Coast Guard and handled coordination with masters and crews of other ships.

Three days later, almost to the hour, a second Mayday call was intercepted. The S/V Martime was stranded on a reef at Serrana Bank. High winds and heavy seas prevented the MSC controlled tanker from approaching the yacht so Captain Delgado launched the port lifeboat. Fighting turbulent seas and whistling winds, volunteers from Sealift Mediterranean battled their way to the yacht and plucked three men from the breaking-up craft.

Back on course for Cristobal, life aboard the Mediterranean was routine until 11 A.M. on June 12. The tanker intercepted a third distress call, this time from 70-year-old Roland Rominski. Owner and operator of the sailboat Ting-A-Ling, he had fallen and was paralyzed. Alone and worried that his small craft would never be spotted by a passing ship, he was overjoyed to hear Captain Delgado's voice on his radio.

Another ship closer to the Ting-A-Ling made the rescue but while it was enroute Captain Delgado remained on the radio to offer what encouragement he could. How important the voice of an unseen master aboard a distant tanker was to Captain Rominski was indicated by a letter he later wrote to Captain Delgado.

"Your voice gave me great encouragement and support," he wrote. "Until I reached you I wondered if I would make it." He admitted he was very much afraid that no one would ever find him and said the reassuring voice on his radio was literally a lifeline, renewing hopes that were already flickering as he fought against paralysis alone on a vast sea.

Opening the October 10 ceremony, Rear Adm. John D. Johnson, the MSC commander, noted the performance of Captain Delgado and his crew. "Their actions," he said, "are one more tribute to professional seafarers who so often risk their own safety to rescue other mariners, doing so with no hesitation or doubt because of political, economic or cultural differences."

In making the presentation to Captain Delgado, Rear Adm. William Benkert, president of AIMS, recounted the five-day saga of the Sealift Mediterranean crew. A retired Coast Guard officer, Admiral Benkert told Captain Delgado and the audience that he was second to none in his admiration for men who go to sea. In no other profession, he said, are its members so willing or so ready to go to the aid of their fellow man. Rescues at sea, he said, are tremendous examples of what can be accomplished by dedicated people, thoroughly familiar with their jobs, who recognize that their own lives may depend on one another's abilities.

Capt. S. Fraser Sammis, who doubles in matters maritime as

Striken SS Joy lays heavy in the water as fire rages out of control.

Sealift Mediterranean crew man a lifeboat on a rescue run to the SS Joy.

chairman of the National Safety Council's Marine Section and president of the National Cargo Bureau, presented the blue, green and white safety pennant which will henceforth be flown by Sealift Mediterranean—and extended his personal congratulations to master and crew of the MSC controlled tanker.

In a sense, MSC members attending the ceremony were stand-ins for the master and crew and for Marine Transport Lines—MTL. They actually were the recipients of the 1978 ship Safety Achievement Award. On hand to receive the annual and coveted award, and to congratulate the colorful ship master were Capt. Edward W. Knutsen, MTL operations manager, and fleet manager Capt. John H. Hill.

Both noted the close ties between MTL, which operates a fleet of nine Sealift class tankers for MSC, and the Navy command. And both had high words of praise for Captain Delgado and the entire Sealift Mediterranean crew. Delgado has sailed under the MTL banner for more than 30 years.

Commenting on their feats and the plaudits the Mediterranean crew's exploits were reaping, another Coast Guard admiral—Rear Adm. Henry H. Bell, chief of the Office of Merchant Marine Safety—made a point that probably has occurred to anyone involved in an awards ceremony, that words, spoken, or written on citations or plaques, can never really describe what takes place during a rescue at sea. A rescue, he said involves those who are in danger, those who are trained and ready to meet emergencies, an element of luck and the harsh realities of the sea itself.

Reality came into better focus when MSC staff members and ceremony principals gathered around Captain Delgado to offer their personal congratulations, and during an informal luncheon when Navy and Coast Guard admirals, MTL officials and MSC staff members shared their seagoing experiences. It was a time for recounting sea stories.

Nobody said it, but it was apparent, at least to this observer, that a rescue at sea may be as routine for a professional mariner as is an awards ceremony for the Washington establishment. That does not minimize qualities such as human courage, expertise, training and dedication. All are vital in fighting a fire at sea, maneuvering a lifeboat through wave, wind and the blackness of night, jumping into bone chilling water to help pull a victim from the sea, or struggling to tie down loose and lethal cargo careening about a rolling ship's hold or deck in a violent storm.

Ironically, some of those mariners who automatically step forward to take part in a rescue operation claim they would never volunteer to face an audience.

The difference is confidence, the feeling that comes from knowing what needs to be done, and how to do it. As Captain Delgado put it "It's very satisfying to be involved in a rescue operation where you can see shipboard training really pay off, where every man does his job and what could be a disasterous situation is overcome by people working together as a team."

In his 30 years with MTL, Captain Delgado has been involved in a number of rescues. One which he vividly recalls took place in the South China Sea—just after Christmas, on Dec. 27, 1964. He then commanded the USNS Chepachet, another tanker operated for MSC by Marine Transport Lines crews and supporting fighting forces in South Vietnam.

Four men had bailed out of a

disabled plane from the carrier USS Hancock and were lost at sea. Six minutes after receiving a radio message asking that all ships be on the lookout for the downed Navy fliers, the Chepachet crew sighted signal flares 30 to 40 miles away.

As the Chepachet approached the floating flares, low flying Navy aircraft signalled SOS and indicated that the ship should follow their direction.

Winds were 15 to 25 knots and the seas were moderate to rough. "As we neared the flares," Delgado said, "I slowed and posted lookouts. Because we did not have powered lifeboats, I decided not to put out our boats and, instead, to maneuver.

"I was watching the water with my binoculars when I saw a flashing green light. We could only see his head bobbing above the water. It was a miracle that we saw him in the dark, against the dark water."

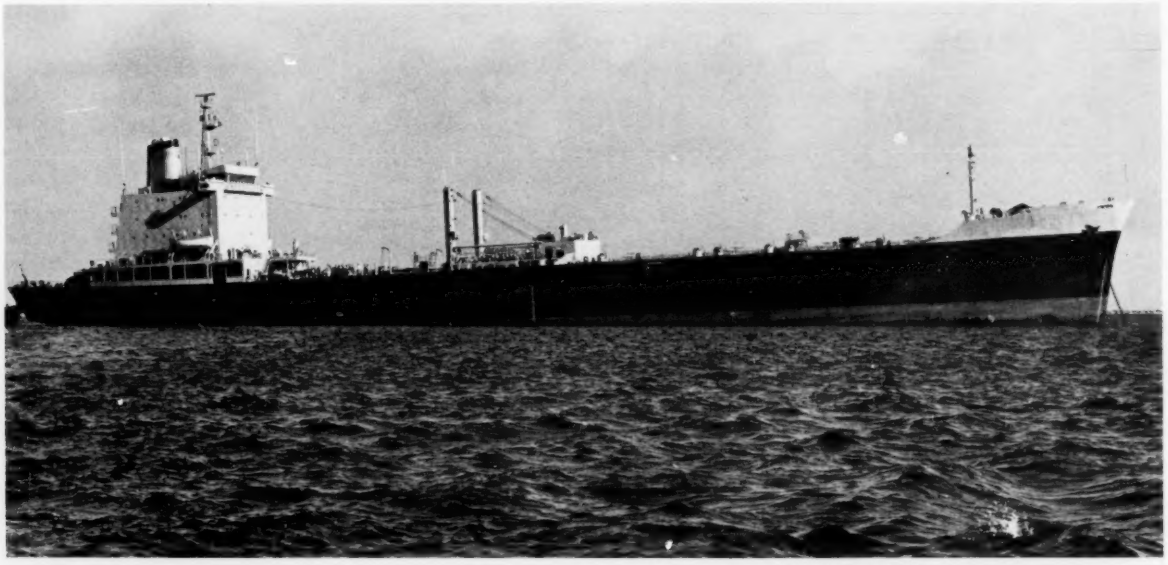
Third Mate Harvey Halcomb went over the side and helped Lt. Harold Nielson, the aircraft pilot, aboard Chepachet. In shock, he had suffered a broken arm and had not been able to inflate his liferaft. Sometime later, a second crewmen was spotted. Again Delgado maneuvered Chepachet near. This time Second Mate William Przelicki went over the side to help the rescued man aboard. A third crewman was rescued by a Liberian ship but the fourth was never found.

For their exploits, Captain Delgado and crew were commended by then Rear Adm. Thomas Moorer. The commander of the Pacific, South Command, who later became the Chief of Naval Operations, said it was comforting to know that dedicated men in merchant ships were available to help when Navy men were in peril. Other congratulatory messages were received from the task force commander and the commander of Military Sealift Command. Rear Adm. E.C. Outlaw, the task force commander, lauded the Chepachet crew for their ability which he said reflected their "training and devotion to duty when the chips are down."

Another rescue by the crew of Chepachet, this one four years later and involving fishermen in a sinking craft, also reaped considerable praise for master and crew. Asked if he thought fate might bring rescued and rescuer togther, Captain Delgado said "I hope not." Obviously he feels

that either the forces of nature or man's own errors create dangerous situations, but he also is a man of strong faith.

"I give thanks everytime I am able to lend a hand to another man at sea," he said. "It's an emotional experience and I am an emotional man. That's why I sounded a long blast from our whistle in a final salute when the Joy went down. It's a



Sealift Mediterranean was on a routine run when the distress message came.

Captain Delgado represented the heroic men who were honored by the award.

The crippled SS Joy eventually sank, but not one crewman went down with it.

tragedy to see a ship go down at sea. It's even more tragic when someone loses his life."

Delgado's love of the sea, his realization of the dangers it can pose, and his faith combine to guide him in a practice he has followed since he became a ship master nearly 20 years ago. Each ship he has commanded has been blessed by a priest—his parish priest, if available. The last ship Captain Delgado commanded for MTL before retiring was the Sealift Mediterranean and it was blessed by a friend, the Rev. Thomas F. Kelly. Father Kelly was Captain Delgado's parish priest when he lived in Jacksonville, Fla.

Now retired, with no plans to go back to sea, Captain Delgado is not yet ready for the rocking chair. "I hope to find something to do to keep me busy, perhaps an ashore job where I can use some of my seagoing experience," he said.

It's been a long time since he began his sea career as a teenage deck hand on United Fruit Co. ships. He worked his way up to AB and bosun, and made master in 1960. Most of his 33 years at sea have been spent with Marine Transport Lines although he also sailed for Lykes Brothers as well as United Fruit.

It's been a long time since he graduated from Almeda Maritime Training Station in 1949 with a license as a third mate, and even longer since he left his native San Francisco.

Unlike Tony Bennett—who left his heart in San Francisco, and has made a mint singing about it, Captain Delgado's heart was lost at sea. It still sails with the Sealift Mediterranean, the Chepachet and all the other ships he has served in.

It remains with his last crew, the men of the Sealift Mediterranean, those who could not make it to Washington for a ceremony because they were doing their jobs, and with the fellow employees of Marine Transport Lines with whom he shared 30 years of seagoing life.

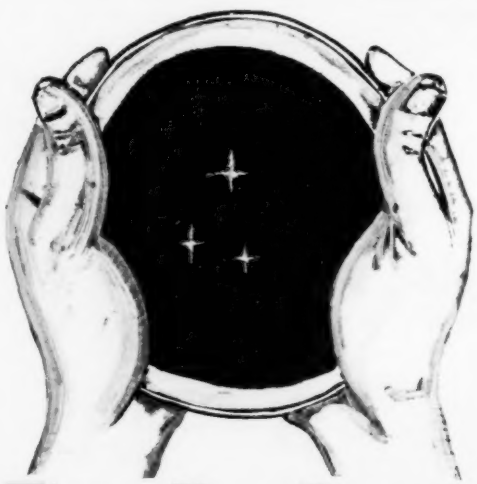
In the end what appeared to be a simple, low-key awards ceremony that day in Washington, Oct. 10, 1978 was in reality a great deal more. It honored a group of men who had willingly risked their lives to help fellow mariners they didn't even know, heroes who could not even be on hand to reap their reward. It was a tribute to the long-term business and operational relationship between Marine Transport Lines and Military Sealift Command. It illustrated the interrelationship of organizations such as AIMS, the National Safety Council and the U. S. Coast Guard, all active in a combined effort to improve safety of life at sea, and, finally, it put the final stamp of approval—the traditional "Well Done"—on a 33 year old seagoing career, that of Capt. Antonio Delgado. ⚓

POEMS OF THE SEA

By Joshua Sandy

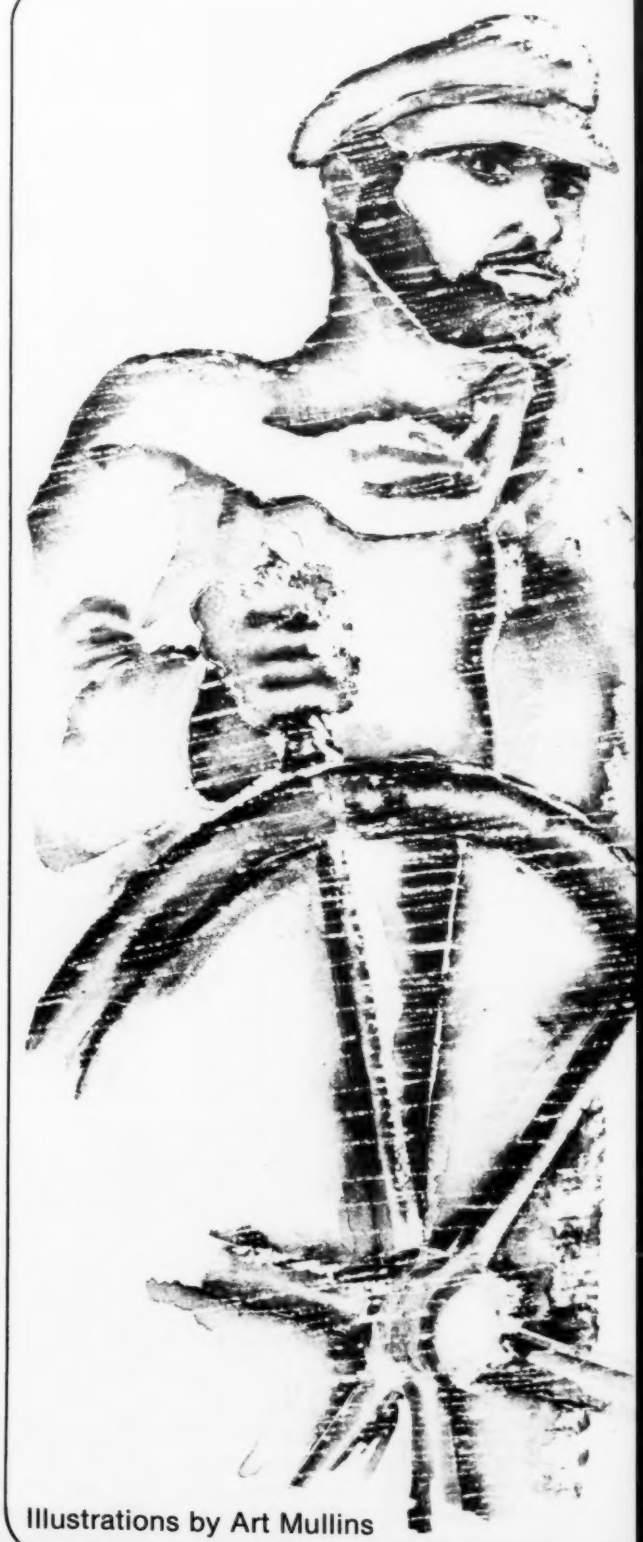
The Telltale Sea

Air crying through windows . . .
Reminds of wind-driven days at sea.
A ship has a special cry
When whipped by breeze, and washed by wave . . .
Almost begging mercifully for a tranquil day . . .
As the moans of steel—and men—are remembered.



Time For Eternity

Absent "the clock,"
Man was destined to zigzag across the sea
With a star, and an etched bowl of liquid,
To guide his destiny.



Illustrations by Art Mullins

Sailor Beware

Storms gather out there
Where toughness must prevail
In those setting sail, lest they succumb
To her fickle whims, her fury, her force,
Tearing ships from their course
Bending man and steel
Shattering the heart of weaker sorts.

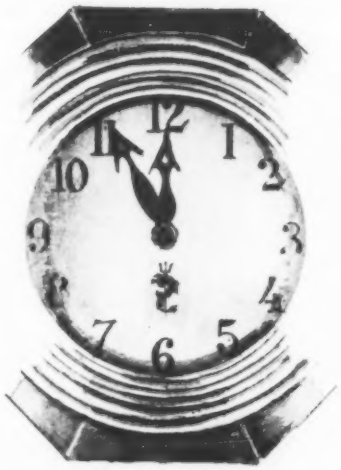
Beware ye souls who dwell on fireside thoughts
Or longingly linger on little folks,
Last seen as resting heads
Soft to the touch, warm in bed.

Break those thoughts sailor man,
Barometer's dropping and winds veering right,
Ship's head's falling to the pounding wave
And airs are cuttin' like a sharpened blade.

No place for a man
Too easy to yield
Before her furys died . . .
And she showing her other side.

That sweet mistress of the deep,
With hair done up
In soft curls of blue
Sprinkled with foamlet like dew,
Holding you, in her bosom deep,
Caressing and lulling,
As you noddingly proceed.
Without heed?

Sailor beware!



The Clock

The rapid tick deceives.
Slow-moving hands bring reality.
Time moves near imperceptively
Toward eternity.

A Great Ship

The heart of a ship is her men
And her greatness is similarly determined.

'Christmas was a miserable day. The evening was even worse.'

Christmas Aboard the Kaiulani

By William Thomas

Story courtesy of Sea History,
National Maritime Historical Society

The problem was the spanker, a triangular sail, brand new and the skipper's pride. The spanker was set behind the mizzen mast and it was the sail closest to the stern. When it was pulling, the Kaiulani steered like a mule with someone yanking at its tail. Unfortunately the new-bought spanker was one of the captain's few extravagances and he was determined to use it whenever possible. In addition to making steering difficult the spanker sent a breeze down the chimney of the cabin stove.

The first mate didn't know this. The night before Christmas Eve, after the captain had gone to bed, the mate ordered the jib and spanker unfurled to the wind. Shortly before midnight the mate sneaked below to light the stove so the cabin would be warm when he got off duty. The mate's fingers shivered with the cold as he struck match after match. The gale sent down the stove pipe by the spanker frustrated the first officer's efforts and he succeeded only in filling the saloon with smoke.

Suddenly a heavy squall pushed upon the sails and brought the Kaiulani almost on to her beam ends. Captain Wigsten came dashing from his cabin and found the mate kneeling before the smoking stove instead of being on deck to cope with the emergency. The scene was becoming all too familiar—the chart house door flying open, the angry skipper emerging followed by a tail of smoke. The frantic captain found the Kaiulani in a very dangerous position, broadside to the wind and heeling badly.

Fortunately most of the crew were already on deck as

the starboard watch was mustering for the midnight change of watches. Captain Wigsten ran to the halyards of the spanker and mizzen staysail and cast them loose while at the same time bellowing for Big John to help the helmsman. The after sails fluttered to the deck. Once that pressure was eliminated the men at the wheel were able to turn Kaiulani's stern into the wind and she came upright while the captain dressed down the mate for thinking more of his own comfort than of the ship.

The captain's words had no more effect than previously, judging from the mate's bland expression. The first officer went below to his bed in the chill cabin while the skipper ordered the sailors to set the spanker again. When the sail was pulling properly, Captain Wigsten sent the donkey man to light the cabin stove. Harry soon returned to report that he could not get the fires started because of the spanker. Captain Wigsten called the sailors aft and had them furl the sail—again it was a miserable job which the seamen hated because they had to climb on top of the chart house and the wheel shelter to reach the sail.

When the job was completed Harry relieved Jimmy Walpole at the wheel. The skipper told Jimmy to light the fire which he did easily. The captain retired to his cabin and Jimmy stood by the wheel yarning with the donkey man. Some time later the old man came on deck again; apparently the events of the evening had disturbed him so much he could not sleep. Walpole asked, "How's the fire, cap?"

A very long pause ensued. Harry wondered if Jimmy had made a mistake in bringing up such a tender subject. The second mate hovering nearby seemed to have the same misgivings. Finally the skipper allowed the stove was burning well and Walpole resumed his talk with the donkey man. He was quickly interrupted by Captain Wigsten who blurted:

"Take the damn stove out and throw it overboard!"

This was the first time Harry had seen Jimmy at a loss for words. Walpole stuttered a bit but did not move because he could not believe he had heard correctly. The second mate seized Walpole by the arm. "Come on Jim," old Lund urged, "we do what the captain says!"

The skipper led them below, illuminating the way with his flashlight. The light from the fire in the potbellied stove danced on the paneled cabin bulkheads as they discussed how to carry it on deck. In the end Walpole got a bucket of sea water which he poured into the stove. Although a lot of steam rose upwards the fire still burned merrily.

Captain Wigsten then grumbled impatiently, "Unship it anyway and throw it over the side!" Jimmy suggested waiting until the fire burned out but the skipper was obsessed with getting rid of the stove before it could again lead the first mate astray.

The second mate went for some wet burlap bags while Jimmy disconnected the chimney under the eye of the restless skipper. When Lund returned with the burlap, he and Jimmy used the damp cloth to protect their hands as they lifted the hot stove and staggered up the companionway with smoke swirling about them.

The panting seamen gingerly carried the fiery furnace across the deck, followed by Captain Wigsten whose determined face was illuminated by the flames. "Overboard!" bellowed the skipper. With a brief flicker of protesting fire the stove disappeared over the side. A moment of silence ensued and then they heard the hiss of hot iron meeting the cold sea. The captain's face relaxed into a satisfied expression and he retired to his bed.

So began Christmas Eve, on gray seas, black because it was night, and with the ship heaving gently. The dark sails served as shock absorbers against the long swells. The donkey man's right arm was sore from the wheel's tug which told him that the Kaiulani was alive, willing to be commanded though insolent. Steering was difficult but he did it well.

He alone stopped the bark from sidling into the wind and dismasting herself. Because of him, the ship of steel and wood and rope and canvas moved steadily onward. He was commander, for a short time, of wind and wave. So long as he did not fail, they would carry Kaiulani toward her destination. He steered well, feeling the ship and the sea, proud of the power which was in his hands.

Christmas Eve. He really did not think of it yet. He was still ruminating about the stove which had gone over the side with a tail of flame and a hiss of man-made iron against primeval sea. Harry struck four bells to note the

'The ship of steel and wood and rope and canvas moved steadily onward.'

second hour after midnight. Another sailor came to take his place at the wheel. Harry told the course to his relief: "Northeast by north."

"Northeast by north," echoed the new helmsman, taking hold of the wheel.

"Northeast by north," Harry said as he passed the second mate. Lund nodded, the battered felt hat on his head moving slightly. Harry thought, don't worry old mate. We'll make it. In Durban you'll see the big native girls in the bamboo compound. Don't worry old Lund. They'll be there. Just as they were 40 years ago when you were young like us.

Christmas Eve. At first he was not homesick. He did not think of his brother and his parents. He did not long for the familiar stucco home and the intimacies of the family. He was not easily turned to sentimentality. When he was, he did not readily confess it. Harry curled up in the wheel shelter and napped until the watches changed at 4 a.m. and he could tuck in to his bunk.

'The rigging vibrated with the wind and the beam seas were beginning to run.'

The Christmas spirit failed to capture the disgruntled skipper. "Christmas is like any other day!" the captain warned the cook.

Fortunately for the sailors Oley fondly remembered Christmas Eve and the sumptuous meals served in his Scandinavian home on that night. No, indeed, Christmas was not like any other day.

Passing seamen sniffed the delicious aromas coming from the galley where Oley was accomplishing culinary magic with the meager resources at his command. The hungry young sailors peeked through the galley doors and saw the cheery Swedish cook, brow damp from his exertions, standing over the big iron stove.

That night he intended to fill their stomachs—a difficult task for they were always ravenous from the fresh air and the hard work. Oley whistled and called cheery greetings to the eager pilgrims to his little galley. Harry called to consult with the cook and went away to prepare a menu for the evening meal. On the typewriter in the donkey room he wrote:

Kaiulani

South Atlantic Dec. 24, 1941

Christmas Eve Smorgasboard

Herring Salad and Pickled Salmon

Buttered Salmon Bellies
with Tarter Sauce

Sliced Tongue

Grilled Ham

Sweet Rice with Cinnamon

Mashed Potatoes

Coffee

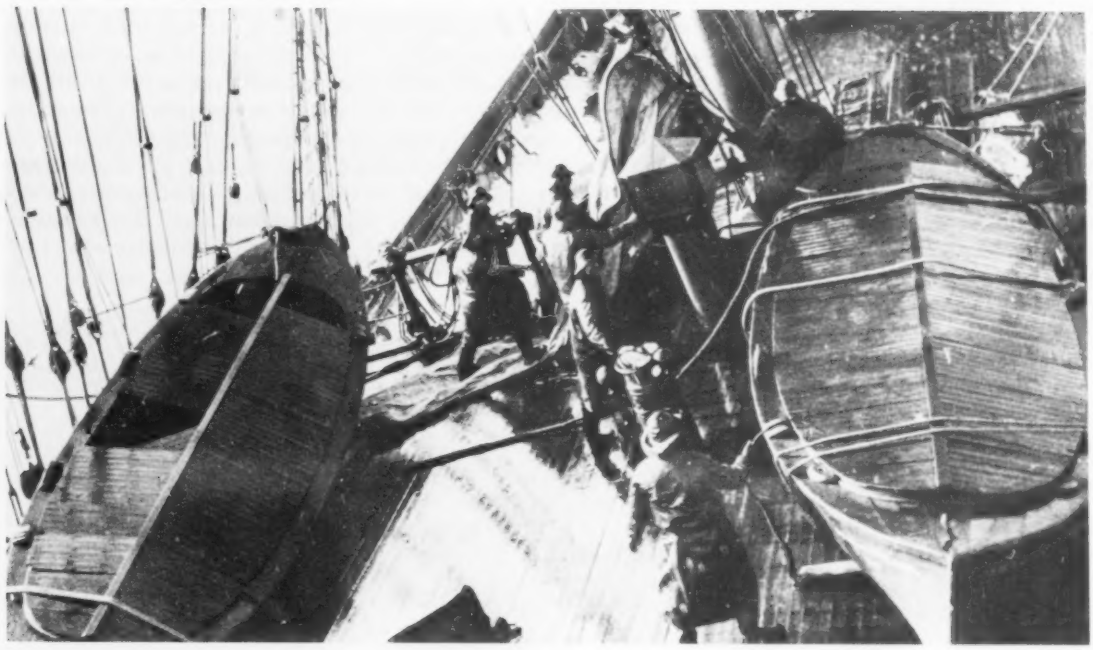
Mince Apple

Pumpkin
Pie

At five o'clock, warning was shouted in the fo'csle that dinner was coming and the starboard watch swarmed to the table.

The food came, mounds of it on platters carried by the mess boy, and the sailors roared their approval. Their

'Kaiulani was alive, willing to be commanded though insolent.'



shouts were quickly muffled by mouthfuls of food as they gorged themselves. They paused barely long enough to grunt a meager approval when Oley dropped by to witness the rapid destruction of his handywork.

The cheerful cook then went aft to the saloon, expecting to add the praises of the officers to those of the sailors. Instead the captain shouted at the dismayed cook, "What kind of junk is this? Isn't the regular food good enough? This is a sailing ship!"

Oley fled before the captain's anger and he was almost in tears by the time he reached the fo'csle. There he found the starboard watch had eaten everything. The seamen were enjoying a state they had almost forgotten—that of being stuffed—and they greeted the unhappy cook with unstinted praise which quickly raised his spirits.

The record player was wound up and they listened to Christmas carols until out on deck the fo'csle bell was rung loudly four times—it was six o'clock and the port watch wanted their turn at the dinner table. The seamen switched off the record player and came on deck to find the wind had increased so much the other watch had brailed up the fore topgallant and mainsail.

The port watch mounted the main shrouds to take in the mainsail while the starboard watch scrambled up to furl the fore topgallant. From the deck where the cook and his mates watched, the men strung out on the yards like blackbirds sitting on the arms of telephone poles.

One of the port watch shouted to the sailors on the next mast, "Merry Christmas!" The lonely cry, thinned by the wind and the space of the sea, was heard by the men struggling with the fore topgallant. One of them called back, "Merry Christmas." The holiday greeting echoed again and again, from watch to watch, yard to yard, across the void of dusk.

Homesickness came wave on wave as Harry beat with callused fists upon the hard canvas of the sail which was wet from the wind-whipped fog. "Merry Christmas . . . Merry Christmas . . . Merry Christmas." Never before had he been away from those he loved at this time of year.

As he climbed with his watchmates down the shrouds of the rolling ship he thought, how far he was from his homeland, from where he had grown up. Where as a child he had run through the sun dried fields of grass, his feet stirring dust from the parched earth, until he had come to the Alameda shore of the Oakland Estuary and looked up in surprised wonder at the brightly painted figurehead of a sailing ship.

The woman carved of wood beneath the bowsprit of the Mary Dollar had looked down unblinkingly. The old windjammer, rusting and idle and forgotten yet romantic and magnificent with her tall masts and crossed yards, had swept him up in a dream which he had followed to the bottom of the earth on this Christmas Eve 15 years later.

The port watch charged eagerly into the fo'csle, yelping like a pack of hounds on the scent of food. That night Oley had forgotten his animosity towards them and they too consumed a monstrous feed.

After dinner they turned on the radio tucked in a wind scuttle of one of the portholes. Faintly, vaguely, from

America came the beautiful song "Silent Night, Holy Night." Harry and Jimmy heard it on the fo'csle head where they were standing the tedious two-hour ice watch. The wind was freshening and an evil night seemed before them. The donkey man's heart sought home. He wondered if they thought of him that night.

Christmas day dawned clear. Later the swirling fog rode in upon the wind and chilled the donkey man as he stood at the wheel. The yards were braced up sharp and Kaiulani, sailing as close to the wind as she could, struggled northwards towards a more hospitable climate.

At 5:30 a.m., while the rising sun dispelled the fog, the starboard watch crowded noisily into the galley for coffee and the special luxury of ham sandwiches. When they went off watch at eight o'clock the rigging vibrated with the wind and the beam seas were beginning to run.

At noon, when the last of the Pitcairn Island chickens were devoured, the fiddles were around the edges of the fo'csle table to prevent the dishes from falling off. During the afternoon the wind increased the rain beat on the decks. The ship tossed and turned and buried her bow in the storm-whipped sea. Spray leaked through the fo'csle skylight and sea water slurped in through the door. The bark's speed was almost 10 miles an hour and her violent motion sent the sailors' possessions flying from their bunks to mingle with the water sloshing on the deck. Christmas was a miserable day.

The evening was even worse. Captain Wigsten sought revenge for the stove incident and the first mate's watch was the object of his wrath. At six o'clock when the port watch stumbled from the fo'csle into the rain they found the skipper waiting for them.

"Set the main upper t'gan's'l!" he bellowed. No sooner were the sailors finished than the captain ordered the fore upper and fore lower topgallant sails set to the mounting wind. The first of the sails flapped down and the ship heeled over a bit more. The pressure of the wind seemed more than canvas could bear.

However, in obedience to the skipper's order, the tired sailors tailed on to the lee sheet for the second sail, the upper topgallant. High above their heads Kenney Glasgow stood on the footrope of the yard and prepared to cast off the gaskets which bound the sail. At that moment a heavy gust of wind caused the ship to heel and ripped the recently set sail to ribbons.

The skipper, his anger tempered by the mishap, cancelled the order to set the second sail. Then he shouted "Lay aloft and furl the fore lower t'gan's'l!" For an hour the port watch struggled on the bouncing yard to tie down the fluttering remnants of the sail the captain had made them set only a short while before.

When the exhausted seamen descended to the deck Captain Wigsten surveyed them with satisfaction, then announced that during the next watch they would have to lower the torn sail to the deck and bend a new one in its place. The command assured that they would work hard in the hours before breakfast.

With a last sidelong glance at their sullen faces Captain Wigsten stumped below to his cabin. The skipper came on deck at midnight and ordered the other watch to take in the main upper topgallant. When this was done the ship was back under the same sails she had been carrying before the captain's wrath spilled over. The seamen stood on the poop and watched the wildly pitching ship bury her bow in the seas. This was to be Cape Horn's farewell.

During the night Kaiulani again crossed the line of 50 degrees south latitude to complete a 20 day passage around the tip of South America. No windjammer owned by Americans was to go that way again. The ghosts of many sailors dead must have cried farewell that Christmas night. ⚓

The salvaged bow of Kaiulani rests in the hold of the Transcolorado.

San Francisco Museum To Display Kaiulani

It was a miserable Christmas day. The evening was worse. The square-rigger was pitching and yawing, spray was leaking through the forecastle skylight and the crew's possessions were flung about to mingle with sea water.

It was Dec. 25, 1941. During the night the merchant bark Kaiulani ended her 20th day rounding Cape Horn bound for Australia with a cargo of explosives. The Pacific war raged in favor of the Japanese and before the vessel completed its voyage the captain would have to seek refuge from Japanese submarines in Hobart, Tasmania.

It may not have been known then, and the thought probably never came to mind, but the Kaiulani was the last American-built square-rigger that would pass around the stormy tip of South America. It also was her last voyage as a sailing ship. When it ended the U.S. Army towed Kaiulani to Australia, stripped off the masts and used her as a coal barge.

After the war, Kaiulani's humble life continued. She was used as a logging barge in the Philippines until 1964, then presented by the Philippines president to the American people under the trusteeship of the National Maritime Historical Society which had been created especially to save the ship.

Various efforts to have Kaiulani returned intact to the United States failed while Kaiulani lie rusting at her moorings. Wind, water, vandalism and a salvager who removed approximately 100 tons of main deck and topsides took their toll before it was decided that the entire vessel could not be returned as originally envisioned.

In 1974, the society sent naval architect Charles Wittholz to the Kaiulani to make a survey. Wittholz, a former Military Sealift Command engineer, drew up plans for salvaging parts of the vessel. A local company cut up the ship according to Wittholz's plans.

Thirty-two pieces, mostly keel and stern, were salvaged and taken to Subic Bay where they were loaded aboard the MSC-chartered heavy-lift ship Transcolorado and transported to Seattle. The historical society planned to raise $5 million to have Todd Shipyards Corp. in Seattle build a working replica using the original pieces.

The Kaiulani would have been lead ship in the bicentennial's Operation Sail and would have eventually been displayed at Bath, Maine where it was built in 1899.

The money could not be raised, however, and the old ship's remains stayed at Todd until the creation of the National Maritime Museum at San Francisco. The museum agreed to create a display using the material from the Kaiulani and the society asked Crowley Maritime Corp. to donate space on a barge to transport the pieces from Seattle to San Francisco. (Crowley Maritime has contracts with MSC to deliver government cargo to various Alaska sites and also handles towing tasks.)

At press time Kaiulani's remains were in a San Francisco warehouse. Peter Stanford, historical society president, said the display is in the design stage and two more years may be needed to complete the project.

Meanwhile, some members of the Kaiulani crew who had returned to their home port of San Francisco were sought out by former journalist William Thomas, now public affairs officer for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Thomas made notes on conversations he had with the crew. Journals, letters and photographs were rounded up and eventually will be part of a book to be published by the society. A first-hand account of the Kaiulani's last voyage is being written by Karl Kortum, former director of the San Francisco Maritime Museum and now chief curator of the National Maritime Museum.—L.R.G. ⚓

John Roach Serves Navy Through His Art

Ever since he can remember peering over his father's drawing table, John Charles Roach has wanted to draw ships, design them and to go to sea in them.

Now, thanks in part to his participation in the Naval Reserve, Roach can do all three.

His love for ships began at an early age. The son of a Navy architect, Roach found that art, especially marine art, had a tremendous appeal for him. It still does.

"If you cut me, I bleed sea water," said the 35-year-old lieutenant reservist. "I sort of grew up around my father's drawing board, loving the water, loving boats and ships."

A member of MSC Detachment 206 in Washington, D.C. Roach volunteered for additional duties as an assistant public affairs officer. "I lose some time drilling with my unit but I feel that public affairs gives me a marvelous opportunity to use my professional skills," he said.

Roach's art has made it's mark in the Navy. His paintings of ships in the waters of Southeast Asia during the conflict there line the executive

Roach's painting of USS Providence hangs in the Pentagon.

Lt. Roach is a reservist with MSC Detachment 206 in Washington, D.C.

corridors of the Pentagon and reproductions are displayed on ships, in Navy offices and service clubs around the world.

While Roach is active in the reserves, he manages a civilian career as a consultant to the Navy Department on ship design and appearance and continues to work as an artist.

Recently, Roach completed an artist's conception of a new type of ocean surveillance ship, 12 of which are being built for MSC operation under sponsorship of the Naval Electronics Systems Command.

Because of those early days at his father's drawing table, Roach has a unique ability to look at blueprints and to sketch what the finished product will look like.

"There is great value in being able to project out of the mind's eye what a ship will look like. You can convey the real feel of the ship, something you don't get in a photograph," he said. "The artist can help you visualize things that words, film or photos cannot do."

Roach feels his duty as a reserve MSC public affairs officer is rewarding. "Not only is it an opportunity to participate, it is also a growing experience."

Roach joined the Navy in late 1966, hoping to become part of a Navy combat art team, much like the celebrated unit that documented through art the Navy's role in World War II. But to his disappointment, he found out that the Navy no longer sponsored such a program.

"Reservists are part-time Navy people only in the sense that time we can spend with our units is limited. But I feel we are Navy in every sense of the word. I wouldn't be a Naval reservist if I didn't think I was contributing something."

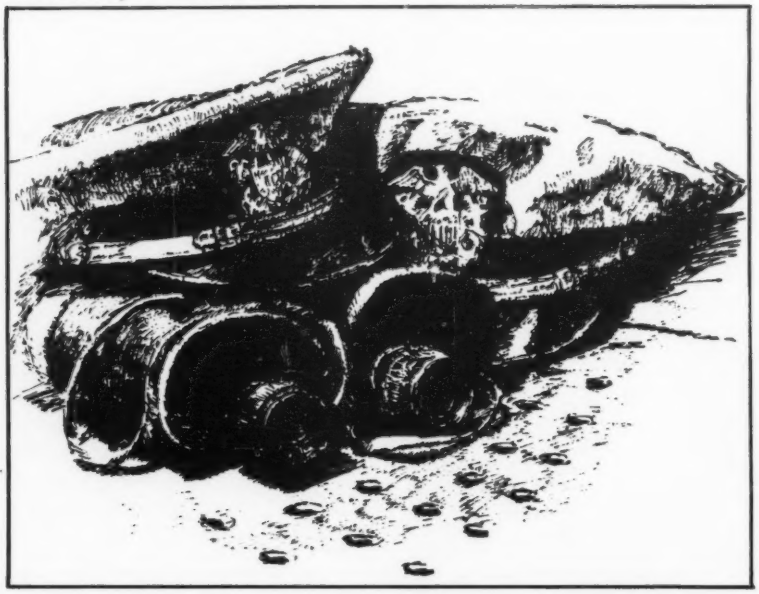
As a member of the MSC headquarters reserve unit, Lieutenant Roach is both a link between MSC sponsored reserve units and the MSC public affairs function—and a means for MSC public affairs people to keep in touch with the few reservists filling public affairs billets plus those who have additional duties in the field. As a result of his interest, MSC public affairs is stepping up its efforts to distribute information and materials to reserve units for use in informing and training reservists

Included are taped interviews with the MSC commander, now being distributed, plus a series of briefings and films that are still being worked on.

He is, of course, looking for help from all reservists who have an interest or skills that can be used in movie making, development of slide presentations, brochures and exhibits, or in any area of the communicative art. Lieutenant Roach also would like photos, slides, film or first-hand reports of MSC operations. "We can use photos or slides in briefings," he said, "or convert them to artwork. Anything that helps us understand what MSC people are doing worldwide can help MSC reservists get the word—and the picture—to other people."

As a reservist, Roach was asked to

Illustration by John Roach

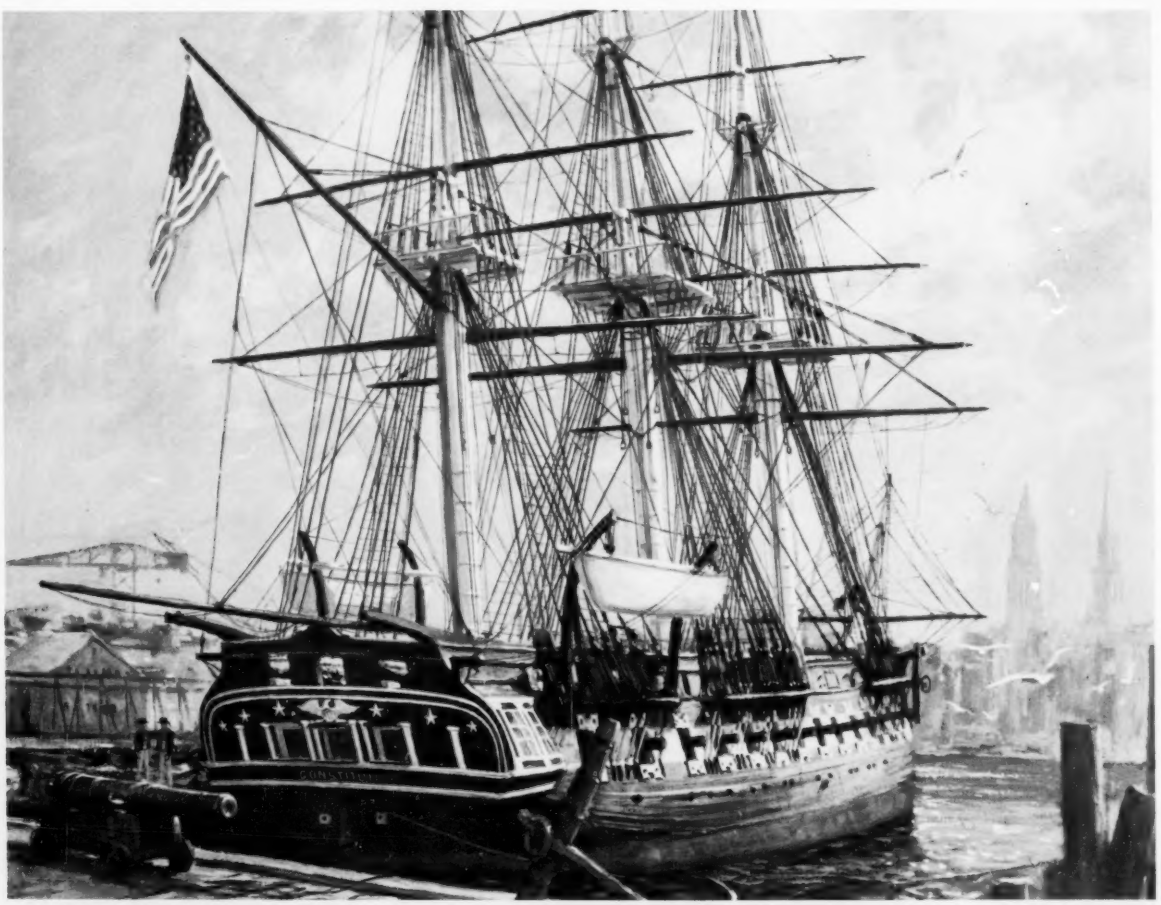


help promote the American bicentennial by focusing public attention on the frigate USS Constitution which was berthed in Boston Harbor and serving as a museum.

Roach produced a series of 66 drawings and two paintings. Combined into a Navy art show, they attracted more than two million viewers at showings throughout the country.

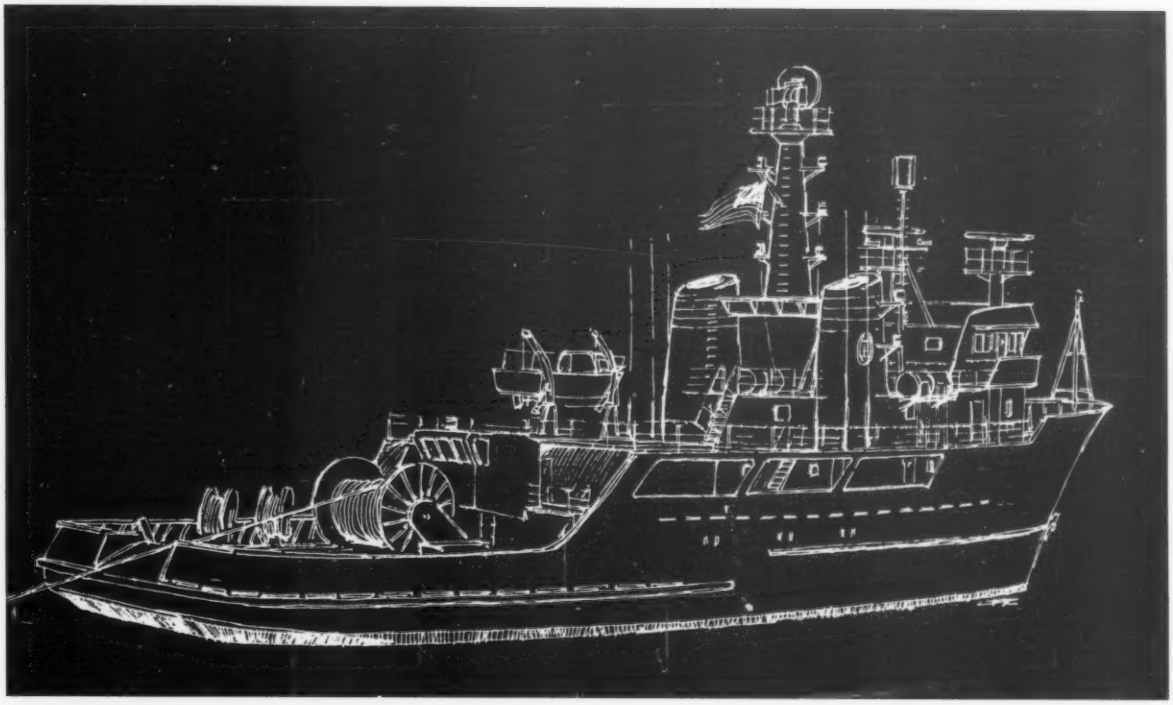
Roach's orders called for only 14 days of training duty, but he spent many more hours on his own after leaving Boston, completing the project in his Arlington, Va. studio.

In 1975 Roach created a series of illustrations for a Navy reserve advertising campaign for which he was honored with a merit award from the Navy's Chief of Information.



One of Roach's most popular paintings is of the USS Constitution.

Roach studied blueprints to visualize what this surveillance ship will look like.



One of his most recent paintings was for the Navy Federal Credit Union headquarters in northern Virginia. It depicts the frigate Constitution's historic bombardment of Tripoli on Aug. 3, 1804.

To insure accuracy in the painting, Roach referred to the Constitution's log to obtain the correct attack signal the ship was flying at the time of the assault. It was signal 179: Blue flag over yellow over blue over red over blue.

Roach is particularly proud of the illustrations and paintings he did during the Vietnam War. "Combat art is the artist's conception of the viewpoint of the guy who was on the front lines," Roach said.

"There is nothing quite as rewarding to me than to see some ex-boatswain looking at one of my combat paintings at an exhibition, then maybe telling his son, 'I was there and that's what it was like.'"

Seaman Roach was assigned to the Navy's recruiting aids division in Washington where he designed posters and recruiting material. But much of his artistic skill remained untapped.

In 1968 he was assigned to draw sketches of the launching of the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy in his hometown of Newport News, Va. His sketches of the event were later published in Naval Aviation News, and his Navy art career was launched.

Within months, he was transferred to the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific. He completed three tours with the fleet, ending each with a separate collection of art illustrating fleet operations. He produced 150 works of art, including nearly 40 paintings.

Perhaps the best known is a painting of the Seventh Fleet flag ship, USS Providence. The guided missile cruiser is shown entering an Asian port as a junk crosses its bow.

The painting has been reproduced many times but the original hangs in the Pentagon outside the offices of Secretary of the Navy W. Graham Claytor.

After his release from active duty as a journalist third class in 1970. Roach entered the University of Maryland to continue his art studies. He earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts and later received a master's degree in fine arts from American University in Washington.

He resumed his navy career in 1974 when he was commissioned an ensign in the Naval Reserve. Although on inactive status, Roach generally finds more than the usual number of assignments to work on. "Despite the limited time I spend as a reservist, I always try to give the job everything I have," he said. ⚓

Joshua Sandy is the pen name for Cmdr. Joshua J. Nelson who recently retired as chief staff officer at Military Sealift Command, Gulf subarea command in New Orleans.

Born of immigrant parents who settled by the sea, Commander Nelson had 25 years of naval service and nearly a decade with MSC, having served in Far East area command, the Canal Zone office as commanding officer, and at Gulf. He plans to continue working in the maritime industry.

A man for all seasons, Nelson writes poetry, scuba dives and is state chairman of the National Defense Transportation Assn. (NDTA). For a glimpse of Joshua Sandy the poet, see page 12.

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